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CIA and State Department accused of mounting invasion of Nicaragua
MEXICO CITY

A former Argentine intelligence officer accused the U.S. State Department and CIA of coordinating and arming a 5,000-person force that plans to topple the leftist Nicaraguan government.

Hector Frances, claiming to be a former member of Argentina's Intelligence Battalion 601, made his claim in an hour-long videotape filmed somewhere in Costa Rica where he claimed to have been stationed as an adviser to rightist groups opposed to Nicaragua's ruling leftist Sandinista junta.

The tape was released in Mexico by the Latin American Federation of Journalists whose officials would not say where they had purchased the film.

Frances said he turned against the U.S.-backed plot to topple the Sandinistas because the U.S. had sided with what he called "the British pirate invaders" in the Falkland Islands war.

Frances claimed that CIA and State Department officials, along with Israeli and Argentine advisers, were aiding the Nicaraguan rightist rebel groups in an invasion that began Oct. 14 with the infiltration of 800 men in groups of 200 into northwestern Nicaragua.

The invasion is intended to terrorize Nicaragua and possibly create a liberated zone in the northwestern part of the country that could be officially recognized by the U.S., Frances claimed.

Nicaraguan officials have denounced stepped up acts of sabotage including the murder and kidnappings of Nicaraguan peasants along the border with Honduras in the last few months.

Frances claimed that the rightist guerrillas operating from camps on the Honduran side of the border are armed with U.S. made Rupert-14 rifles, 60 and 80 mm. mortars and have landing strips capable of handling DC-3 airplanes.

He said the rightist forces in Honduras include some 3,000 troops along with about 2,000 Miskito Indians on both sides of the border.